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ABSTRACT

Modern curriculum theory is predicated on the belief that the primary purpose of education is to change or modify the behavior of the learners. Curriculum, thus, consists of all the experiences the school provides to allow students to achieve the greatest possible fulfillment of their potentialities. Current curriculum improvement programs are attempting to come to grips with the reality of pupil differences in relation to knowledge. Such practices as team teaching, individualized instruction, alternative schools, career education, bilingual education and the back to basics movement have all precipitated curricular changes. In order to improve today's educational system we must involve the members of society who are directly responsible for the education of children in setting up a curriculum that is relevant to the learner and to the needs of the society of which he is a member. (Author/RLV)

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METHODS OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Earl J. Ogletree & Margaret Welfare

History

Historically, the educational curriculum was a quest for universal literacy. To read The Bible and do sums in the Dame School constituted the foundation of the first curriculum.

With the establishment of public education, new needs, goals, content and strategies evolved. Education was discipline-centered and based on the mastery of the age-old disciplines.

After the American Revolution, accelerating changes in social conditions demanded new priorities and purposes for educating the masses. Pressures from governmental, business, labor and special interest groups were being exerted on the educational system to prepare for the industrialization and urbanization that was to take place. Schooling was considered a means of overcoming disadvantages.[1]

Educators formulated teaching strategies based on the epistomology of the philosophers. Ideas of European educators, advocated by such pioneers as Horace Mann and Henry Barnard had an impact on the system.

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[1]John U. Michaelis, Ruth H. Grossman, and Lloyd F. Scott, New Designs for Elementary Curriculum and Instruction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1975), p.6.

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The field of psychology emerged with widely divergent theories of learning which included those of Skinner, Piaget, Gestalt and Thorndike. Eminent educational thinkers and scholars, drawing from these theories of learning, formulated their own psychological theories that have served as a basis for curriculum design.[2]

Not until the turn of the century did the impetus of curriculum and educational objectives become a subject of concentrated study.

Until 1900, faculty psychology dominated a subject-oriented curriculum. It slowly decreased in acceptance, becoming increasingly behavioral. Educational objectives were and still are stated in behavioral terms.

World War I initiated a trend in a vocational-oriented curricula.

The impact of John Dewey's progressive movement led many leading theorists to reform what was being taught and learned in the schools.[3] Learning experiences relevant to young children's needs were developed through Kilpatrick's "project method" and the unit plan, in which topics of interest became the center of children's learning experiences. Remedial and gifted programs were also implemented.

Attention to the learning process led to a curriculum of subject fields or groups of related study. In some programs

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[2]B.R.Hergenhahn, An Introduction to Theories of Learning (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976), p.32.

[3]John I. Goodlad, School, Curriculum and the Individual (Massachusetts: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1966), p.18.

all the subjects were related through a core curriculum.[4]

By 1955, schooling was recognized as an agent for social change. Curriculum projects such as the broad field curriculum were designed to bridge the gap between early schooling, elementary and secondary education.

Technological, social, cultural, environmental and economic change necessitated a revaluation and reassessment of the curriculum. Many programs have been developed to meet the needs of society. Some have been short-lived, others have served as a foundation for more extensive programs.

Recently, societal pressures have caused the curriculum to be reassessed in terms of basic knowledge and individualized instruction.[5]

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[4]Gail M. Inlow, The Emergent Curriclum (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), p.13.

[5]Joyce Elaine Johnson, "Back to Basics? We've Been There 150 Years," The Reading Teacher 32 March 1979: 644.

Description

Societal influences and forces have caused educators and scholars to examine both the process and content of the curriculum. Recent developments include national projects in the disciplines, a change in scope and direction of content, pressures on children and teachers, consequences of technological change, the structure of the disciplines, the interest in curriculum research, the impact of team teaching, mass media, data processing and computer science, programmed instruction, independent study, early childhood education, open education, programs for the culturally deprived as well as other handicaps, programs for the talented, gifted and creative, a detailed comprehensive program to treat individual differences and the back-to-basics movement.[6]

Curricular history is often vague and appears to have contradictory overtones. The definition itself has caused indecision among theorists and scholars alike. Because of the involvement of the personal values of the designer, it is understandable that a definition of curriculum varies as greatly as the designs. Beauchamp defines curriculum as "a written plan depicting the scope and arrangement of the projected educational

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[6]Vernon E. Anderson, Principles and Procedures of Curriculum Improvement (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1965), p.6.

program of the school.[7] To many an educator this is synonymous with the course of study.

Oddly enough, there is agreement among the theorists that an "effective curriculum" must have at least four components:

1. a statement of aims and objectives
2. logical selection and organization of content
3. certain stated or implied patterns of learning and teaching
4. a program for the evaluation of outcomes[8]

Before any curriculum design can be implemented in the school system, one must set priorities in regards to the learner as suggested above. Various models, similar to the one above, serve to guide the construction of a curriculum which, in turn, directs the development and use of the curriculum.[9]

A model suggests the kinds of choices that must be made, contains assumptions and postulates about education that have a direct bearing upon the currriculum and its construction. It also suggests ways to involve appropriate people in its planning and helps to identify the technological process necessary for the planning to be accomplished.[10]

Tyler, Wheeler and Kerr present three distinct models of

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[7]Michael Golby, Jane Greenwald, and Ruth West, eds., Curriculum Design (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p.169.

[8]Hilda Taba, Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1962), p.287.

[9]Golby, op.cit., p.225.

[10]James Eaton, An ABC of the Curriculum (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1975), p.38.

curriculum development that have been used.

Tyler's model suggests aims and objectives, content, organization and evaluation. In other words, what educational objectives does the school seek to attain? What experiences can be provided to attain these educational experiences? How can these experiences be organized? How do we determine if these purposes are attained?[11]

Wheeler presents a circular model of rational curriculum planning. He proports curriculum to be an ongoing process that has:

1. aims, goals and objectives
2. selection of learning experiences
3. selection of content
4. organization and integration of learning experiences and content
5. evaluation[12]

Kerr's flow chart model interrelates objectives, school learning experiences, knowledge and evaluation.[13]

Choices based on the various models will produce various courses of action, and, therefore, different models appropriate to a particular school situation.

Modern theory is predicated on the belief that the primary purpose of education is to change or modify the behavior of the learners. Curriculum, thus, consists of all the experiences the

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[11]Ralph W. Tyler, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), p.1.

[12]Eaton, op.cit., p.15.

[13]Ibid., p.39.

school provides to allow students to achieve the greatest possible fulfillment of their potentialities.[14]

Curriculum designed to produce functioning democratic citizens must be based on:

1. the demands of the society in which the learners live
2. the needs, interests, maturity, goals and ability of a particular child or group
3. the democratic heritage and values which society cherishes and wants to perpetrate[15]

If the educational system is to formulate instructional programs to meet the above criteria, change the behavior of the learner, and realize that learning is a personal matter, it is rational to state that not all curricula will produce desired outcomes. The learner is being studied more than ever before. Modern theorists are studying more carefully the theories of Piaget, Ausubel, Bruner, Phenix and Bloom.[16]

Current curriculum improvement programs are attempting to come to grips with the reality of pupil differences in relation to knowledge. Programs include compensatory education in which the school takes the responsibility of trying to provide for children that which they need experientially if they are to be successful with the things they will be asked to do in school.

Team teaching pools the efforts of several teachers

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[14]Stephen J. Knezevich, Administration of Public Education (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), p.389.

[15]Hanna Lavone, "Meeting the Challenge," in Contemporary Thought On Public School Curriculum, eds. Edmund C. Short and George D. Marconnit (Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1968), p.68.

[16]Hergenhahn, op.cit., p.78.

working with students at a particular age level wherein pupils receive the best of skills and abilities an individual teacher has to offer.

Advantages of team teaching include exposing pupils to the strengths of more than one teacher; teachers are exposed to the teaching styles of their colleagues and the team teaching program allows a flexible approach to teaching.[17]

Individualized instruction is a process that allows teachers to alter instructional methods to accomodate the individual needs, interests, and capabilities of each pupil. Instruction may be on a one-to-one basis, within a small group, independent or even in a large group. It is an extremely flexible program often implemented through team teaching.[18]

Individualized instruction is also the basis for a continuous progress program which permits a student to advance as quickly or as slowly as he must in each subject in an ungraded continuum through eighth grade.

The alternative school rejects the traditional school pattern of ability grouping, competitiveness, evaluation on a routine basis, large classes, teacher control and a predetermined course of study. Emphasis is placed on self-direction and bureaucratic intervention is delimited as much as possible.

Students play an active role in deciding their individual educational affairs, rules of behavior, standards and educational

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[17]Louis Rubin, Curriculum Handbook (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977), p. 562.

[18]Ibid., p.562.

process are loosened, each individual learning style is accepted and there is emphasis on self-expression and decision-making.[19]

The alternative school has become synonymous with the "free school" and "open school."

Career education is relatively new to the changing curriculum. Origin is found in early vocational education. Implemented at the secondary school leve, career education programs take form in work-study programs.

Although vocational training programs have not been abandoned at the secondary level, they have been demphasized as schools have become more computerized. Relatively little research has been done to judge the effectiveness of the work-study programs to date.[20]

The open classroom is specifically child-centered and teacher-oriented. It is an active-learning center in which subject matter is used to reach other areas of experience. The learning process is multidimensional, personal and continuous. Among the basic beliefs is faith in the ability of the student to solve his problems. He achieves this through self-directed and self-paced instruction.[21]

Individualized prescribed instruction is based on behavioral objectives that correlate with diagnostic instruments, curriculum materials, and teaching techniques. IPI is a system of pre and

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[19]John L. Tewksbury, "Alternative Programs in Public Elementary School," Education Digest 42 December 1976: 21.

[20]Rubin, op.cit., p.415.

[21]Charles E. Silberman, The Open Classroom Reader (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p.288.

post tests and prescription sheets that attempt to systematize instruction. Learners move at their own style. There is an independent pursual of learning on the part of the child. Materials are organized in units and levels closely related and correlated with diagnostic measurement. One might consider IPI a system of open education because of the freedon of movement and activity.[22]

Most current of programs is the back-to-basics movement. Reading, writing and arithmetic are the focal points of an emerging curriculum. It demands minimal competency, proficiency testing and a performance-based curriculum.[23] The movement is popularly considered a swing of the pendulum back to the disciplines.

Other programs that have precipitated curricular changes are the bilingual-bicultural program, early childhood education, tutoring programs, criterion-based programs, modular scheduling and a series of programs either mandated or an outgrowth of contemporary curriculum designs.

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[22]Diane Divoky, "Too Elaborate, Critics Say, But IPI Keeps Growing," Nation's Schools 84 November 1969: 46.

[23]Ben Brodinsky, "Back to Basics: The Movement and Its Meaning," Phi Delta Kappan March, 1977, p.207.

Review of Literature

Roland Barth, the foremost champion of open education implies that open education creates an environment of exploration and learning of one's self in a unobstructed world.[24]

Advocates of the open school say pupils have a greater sense of responsibility, an awareness of social standards and have excelled in all of the affective domains of learning. Studies have shown that students in the open classroom do as well as students in the traditional schools in cognitive achievement.[25]

It is questioned by others whether such education provides the learner with all the requirements for postschool success and if it enables him to cope with the expectancies of society.[26]

Several studies favor programmed instruction compared to conventional. These studies posulate that the rate of learning is tripled in rote learning materials while getting immediate feedback to responses.[27]

While critics of IPI say the program is too elaborate and too expensive, they agree that individualized instruction is not a passing fancy in the curriculum. They complain that the materials

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[24] Rubin, op.cit., p.378.

[25] Stanley G. Sanders and Jean P. Wren, "The Open School-How Effective?" Elementary School Journal September 1976: 59.

[26] Rubin, op.cit.,p.378.

are complicated and contain multitudinous paper work. Criticisms include the elimination of competitiveness and student interaction.[28]

Career education programs often take shape in work-study programs or vocational programs directed to high school youth. It is an effort to provide marketable skills and prepare youth for the world in which they may compete.[29]

Vocational programs have singularly appealed to alienated students but have been enlarged to include the entire high school population.

Observers and critics of career education feel that less focus is placed in human development and more on the quest for jobs. A balanced general education, they feel, might prove more serviceable than premature occupational training. They further suggest that career education should be redirected and enlarged to include students younger than fourteen years of age.[30]

Many teachers who find themselves compatible and challenged are unlikely to criticize the efforts of team teaching. The ultimate of teacher utilization is created by combining their talents and skills. Students are exposed to various "models" of behavior by working with several teachers. The plan helps to

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[28]Divoky, op.cit., p.44.

[29]Daniel U. Levine, "Work-Study Programs," Education Digest 42 March 1977: 39.

[30]L.S.Hansen, "Career Development Education," Education Digest 42 December 1976: 55.

insure that each child will have at least one teacher to whom he can easily relate. The optimum belief is that teachers will grow and develop and bring continuing inservice stimulation.[31]

Failure of team teaching has been the result of personality clashes and the inablility of teachers to integrate their materials. Critics say schools have not identified their most capable teachers for team-teaching is actually directed to the teachers rather than the students.

Several studies show that team teaching had no more affect on the achievement of students than those in self-contained classrooms.[32]

The alternative schools offers students greater choice. They provide a school situation more conducive to changes and improvement. Because they deviate from the traditional "one practice for everyone," the optional school finds less criticism from those parents who send their children voluntarily. Community pressures are virtually nonexistant, for there is no need of the local citizens.[33]

Criticisms of the alternative school vary. Because of their very nature they may be considered open schools, trade schools, continuation schools, etc. Each of these alternatives have their own critics.

The current back-to-basics movement has many educators

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[31]G.Wesley Sowards and Mary-Margaret Scobey, The Changing Curriculum and the Elementary Teacher (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, inc., 1968), p.115.

[32]Ibid., p.116.

[33]Terrence E. Deal and Robert R. Nolan, "Some Propositions About Alternative Schools," Education Digest 42 February 1979: 14.

questioning its definition. The basics-reading, writing and arithmetic have never been out of the curriculum, yet crusaders of the movement are seeking their return. The movement appears to be nothing more than a convenient satisfaction package offered to a society that has been critical of the educational product. Tightening up the educational belt means teaching a child to read, compute and write a grammatically correct sentence.[34]

Basics is a return to the disciplines, if for no other reason than to put the schoolroom back in the hands of the teacher. It is education's answer to accountability.[35]

The movement, according to its followers, will show improvement in test scores, but they will be of the low cognitive precesses that are easily measured. It will lead to pupil alienation and dropout. Competitiveness for grades will increase.[36]

Each of the programs aforementioned have disciples and critics. Both are necessary to create curricula that will develop a learner to his full potential. Accepting the fact that children learn at different rates, in different styles, through their own interests and that learning is not exclusive to a school, program, or particular method of instruction, it is possible to

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[34]Brodinsky, op.cit., p. 215.

[35]Johnson, op. cit., p. 646.

[36]John I. Goodlad, "Can Our Schools Get Better?" Phi Delta Kappan January, 1979, p. 343.

conclude that the quest of knowledge that integrates one into society may take place in any or all of the programs mentioned. It is not for us to judge which is the correct way.

Implications

One needs to evaluate today's curriculum in light of the changing values of society. Critics have accused the schools of not doing its job. This is not new, for the American educational system has always received the brunt when all else has failed. These criticisms are often justified when one reads of high school graduates who cannot read adequately or compute simple mathematical problems.

Just what are the schools doing? In some cases- nothing! They are moving a group of youth through an assembly line and literally producing "lemons" who are souring society.

What can be done to make the educational system of today one to be admired? What needs to be done is to involve the members of scoiety who are directly responsible for the education of children in setting up a curriculum that is relevant to the learner and needs of the society of which he is a member. Harmony will prevail among the boards of education, administrators, teachers, parents and students, and members of the community if all take a vital interest in the curriculum and its implementation. It is they who should formulate the objectives of the curriculum. It is the teaching staff that must provide the instruction to meet the objectives, and it is the entire community that must evaluate the program.

According to Tyler, the learner must take an active role

in the learning process. There must be greater emphasis on the nonschool areas of learning.[37] Parents must be responsible for the moral and ethical education of their children. Teachers must approach the instruction of the children in a humanizing way.

If one views education as on ongoing process, educational experiences in school will extend to noneducational experiences as well. It will begin in infancy and extend through the senior years. It will encompass the disciplines, the values, ethical, moral and democratic principles of society.

One sees the curriculum of the future as providing for individual growth through a flexible curriculum that will necessitate increased individualized instruction with an establishment of minimum competencies as the basis for promotion. The theories of Piaget, Bruner and Bloom will affect education as it moves to creating divergent thinkers.

Finally, there is a need for extensive curriculum research as evidenced by most sources cited that identifies the role and function of each member of the educational hierarchy, that adapts more quickly to change, and, in general, provides a curriculum for today's student in tomorrow's world.

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[37]Ralph W. Tyler, "The New Emphasis in Curriculum Development," Education Digeest 42 February 1977: 11.

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